

John C. and Catherine Jackson House
215 Ruskin Drive
Llyswen Neighborhood
Altoona
Blair County
Pennsylvania

HABS No. PA-5907

HABS
PA,
7-ALTO,
135-

PHOTOGRAPHS
WRITTEN HISTORICAL AND DESCRIPTIVE DATA

Historic American Buildings Survey
National Park Service
Department of the Interior
Washington, D.C. 20013-7127

HISTORIC AMERICAN BUILDINGS SURVEY
JOHN C. AND CATHERINE JACKSON HOUSE

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Location: 215 Ruskin Drive

Date of Erection: ca. 1904-06

Description: The only brick-veneered version of a type known locally as the "Llyswen cottage," this two-and-a-half-story house has a cross-gable roof with cornice returns at the side gables, and a front gable faced with scalloped wood shingles surmounting a two-story bay. Pierced brackets decorate the overhang at the ends of the closed gable above the bay, and rough brick "quoins" accent the vertical lines of the bay's intersecting planes. The brick veneer is high quality, with smooth, high-fired red brick butter-jointed with red-stained mortar for a uniform visual effect. The hip-roofed front porch has tapered round columns and carved brackets where its cornice meets the facade. The porch railing is modern. All of the original windows on the front and sides of the house have segmental brick arches. The front door has the same arch and a transom. The house at 221 Ruskin Dr. is a virtually unaltered all-wood version of this same "Llyswen cottage," of which six or seven other examples exist in the neighborhood. All were built between 1903 and 1908. Several of them share millwork identical to that found in houses built during the same period by P. W. Finn at 312 (HABS No. PA-5888) and 314 Coleridge Ave.

History: This house was built for John C. and Catherine Jackson between 1904, when the city directory lists John as a laborer boarding in his father's house on Beale Avenue, and 1906, when tax records identify him as a molder with a house and lot at this address. Jackson purchased the lot from the Altoona Suburban Home Company in 1903 for \$350. The Jacksons sold the house in 1914 for \$3,000 to John C. Hanley, a tender builder (later a boilermaker) for the PRR. The 1920 Sanborn map, the earliest of this section of Llyswen, shows a two-story wood-frame stable behind the house, a rare amenity in Llyswen. By 1932 it was replaced by a one-story garage. John and Laura Hanley made this house their home for thirty-seven years. In 1951 they sold it to Scott Geesey, a teacher at Altoona Senior High School, and his wife, Noribel. The Geeseys sold it in 1975 for \$18,500. The current owners, who bought the property in 1976, have recently listed it for sale.

Sources: Maps: 1920, 1932, 1951. City directories. Tax records. Deed books: 145/96, 227/674, 337/588, 337/590, 651/339, 971/549, 982/29.

Project Information: This report was part of a larger project to document the city of Altoona, Pennsylvania. The project was undertaken by the Historic American Buildings Survey/Historic American Engineering Record (HABS/HAER), Robert Kapsch, chief, at the request of America's Industrial Heritage Project (AIHP), Randy Cooley, director. An overview of the history of the city (HABS No. PA-5784) and an overview of Llyswen (HABS No. PA-5787) provide context for these buildings as well as a comprehensive list of sources. See also additional HABS reports on buildings in the city and other neighborhoods.

This report was prepared by Kathy Edwards in the summer of 1989 under the supervision of Alison K. Hoagland, HABS historian, and Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian. Edwards's and other project historians' work was published as Railroad City: Four Historic Neighborhoods in Altoona, Pennsylvania (Washington, D.C.: HABS/HAER, National Park Service, 1990), edited by Kim E. Wallace, supervisory historian, and Sara Amy Leach, HABS historian.

JOHN C. AND CATHERINE JACKSON HOUSE
HABS No. PA-5907 (Page 2)

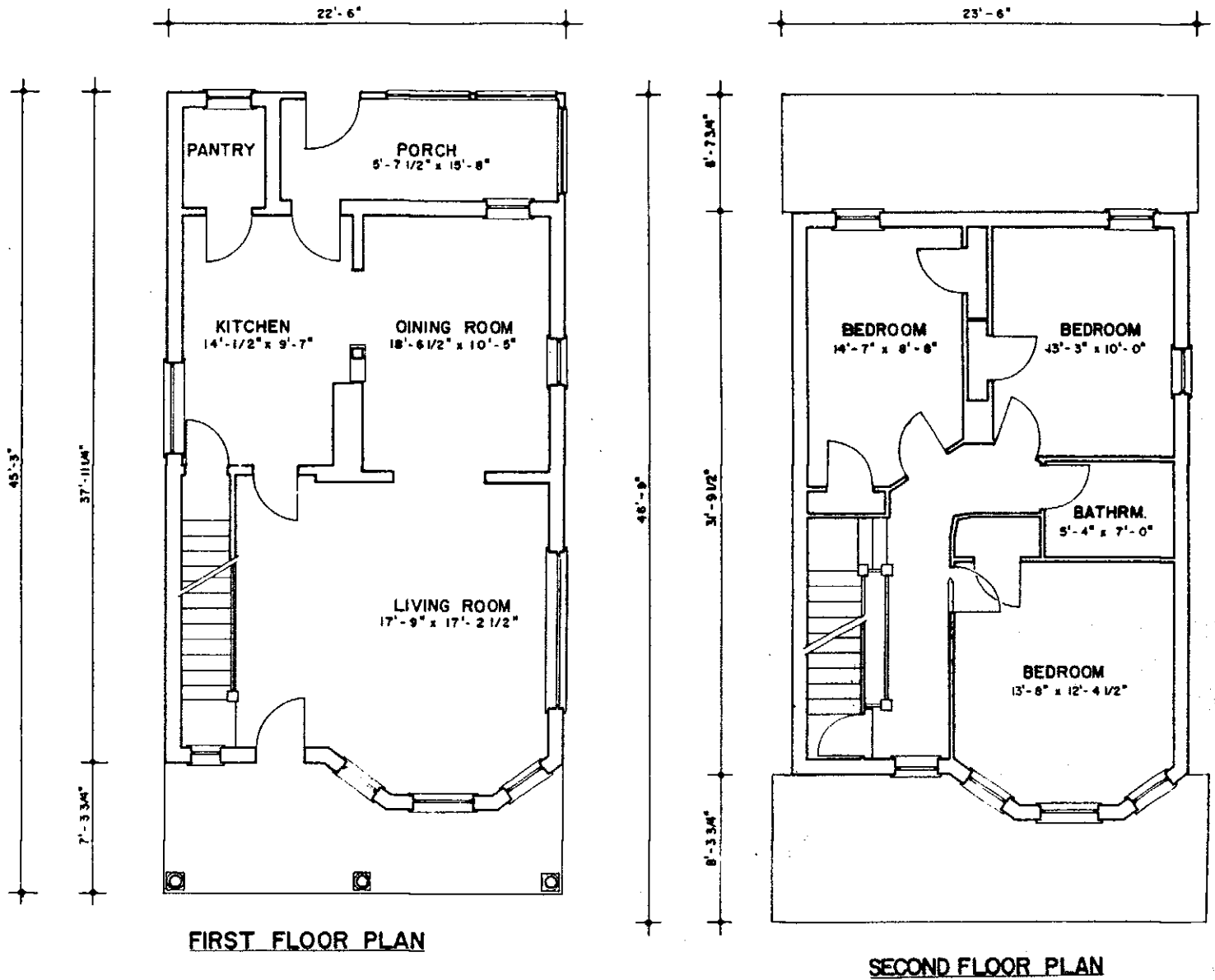


Fig. 1.1 First- and second-floor plans. Drawn by Robert W. Anthony.

Addendum To:

JOHN C. & CATHERINE JACKSON, HOUSE
Lyswell Neighborhood
215 Ruskin Drive
Altoona
Blair Co.
Pennsylvania

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REDUCED COPIES OF MEASURED DRAWINGS

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